Hello valued volunteers. I wanted to share my thoughts with you on the multi-use facility that you all had a part in making happen. Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge was selected to receive Legacy funds in FY2018 for the design and construction of a new multi-use facility, outdoor enhancements, and messaging. Senators Capito and Machin were very instrumental in helping in this effort. This is a result of great bi partisan accomplishment to attain a beautiful building for the staff of Canaan Valley NWR (Refuge) and West Virginia Field Office (WVFO), visiting public, and citizens of this community. There have been some ups and downs since this project started, but the weather has fully cooperated to accomplish this objective. I would like to let you know what has happened in the past few months to fully explain our status.

Beginning on February 26, 2020 staff from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the designer, Oak Point Associates, conducted a pre final inspection on the building. At that point, we compiled a list of items that needed to be addressed. Around March 2, 2020 staff began to move items out of the temporary trailer in preparation for its removal. As staff were getting their office set up, the temporary trailer was removed shortly thereafter. Contractors are addressing the final details throughout the building and it is all coming together!

Refuge and WVFO staff continue to work with Formations on finalizing the interpretive exhibits inside and outside the building. We are getting close to completion of many of these exhibits and right now the completion date is scheduled to be around June 1. We are currently closed to the public and will keep you update on the grand opening.

If the event that this changes and we are able to open sooner rather than later, look for information on our Facebook page or website. Stay safe and remember each other before yourself.

Volunteer Newsletter

CVNWR Multi-Use Facility - Ron Hollis, Project Leader

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Chris Clower  Room South
Photo Credit: Ron Hollis
Volunteer Update

We hope that this newsletter finds you healthy and safe! Winter appears to be over. Wood frogs are singing and birds are migrating back! We have much to update you on so this newsletter will focus more on updates rather than a call for volunteer help. With that said March was busy moving staff and the Friend’s bookstore out of the trailer and into the new building. We still have items in the Maintenance Bay that will need to find a home before field season gets busy. Exciting times are ahead for Canaan Valley NWR and we can’t wait to share it with you all!

Freeland Boardwalk Update!

Construction has begun! Our contracting office has awarded the Freeland Boardwalk construction project to Northern Management Services. This is the same contractor who constructed the new multi-use facility. As you are reading this, Freeland Boardwalk has been closed and on the ground construction has begun. The anticipated completion of the project is late April / early May. But as most things in Canaan Valley, weather will be a factor. The new boardwalk will follow some of the same path as the old one but with some changes.

The image to your left shows the original boardwalk with the new boardwalk design overlaying it. The platform that overlooks the bubbling spring will be raised six feet to provide an amazing view! Composite decking will be used for the walkway which will help cut down on the amount of maintenance the boardwalk will need.

New interpretive material is currently in design for Freeland Boardwalk as well. This updated material will encourage visitors to use their senses as they walk along.

Stay tune to Facebook as we post updates on how the construction is going!

Skunk Cabbage.
Photo Credit: Ken Strum
Woodcock Satellite GPS Transmitters UPDATE

This October, the Refuge embarked on a new endeavor in coordination with the University of Maine and the Ruffed Grouse Society. The American woodcock migration project is working to understand woodcock migration patterns. To capture the birds, mist and drop nets were used. Master bander, LeJay Graffious, was responsible for banding and placing a GPS transmitter on all woodcock captured. Four woodcock were captured and tagged on the Refuge, which are the first, and only in the state of WV. Unfortunately, for unknown reasons we lost a signal on two of the four transmitters. However, two woodcock successfully migrated. One overwintered in Louisiana and the other in South Carolina. Watch for update on their return migration trip. The Refuge is looking forward to doing more American woodcock transmitter work in the future.

Migratory paths of captured Woodcocks.

LeJay attaching a band and gps tracking on an American woodcock
Fisher and Bobcat Study

The Refuge is again assisting WVU and WV DNR on a bobcat home range project as well as helping collect tissue samples from fishers in order to extract DNA. We use live traps to catch the animals and use a trail camera to monitor the trap. Once we have a picture of a fisher or bobcat coming in, we then set the trap. Once the trap has been set we check it every morning. When a bobcat is caught the DNR is called, they come out check out the cat and put a collar on it. When a fisher is caught, we take hair samples and then it is released. This year with the help of a local trapper we have set a total of five traps and caught one male bobcat, and 4 fishers.

Bobcat caught by trail camera. Photo Credit: USFWS

Fisher caught by trail camera. Photo Credit: USFWS
Cheat Mountain Salamander Occupancy Study

The Refuge began a new Cheat Mountain salamander (CMS) initiative with USGS to develop a site occupancy model for CMS. This fall 114 sites were sampled during October and November. While no Cheat Mountain salamanders were found, 81 red-backed salamanders (*Plethodon cinereus*), 11 northern dusky salamanders (*Desmognathus fuscus*), 6 Allegheny Mountain dusky salamanders (*D. ochrophaeus*), 2 slimy salamanders (*P. glutinosus*), 2 northern two-lined salamanders (*Eurycea bislineata*), and 4 northern spring salamanders (*Gyrinophilus porphyriticus*) were found. Drought conditions in the fall may have reduced salamander abundance. Surveys will resume in the spring with each of the 114 being surveyed twice and then again in the fall.

Releasing Red Spruce to Speed up Successional!

At the end of November, AmeriCorps and ACE interns at the refuge returned to the site of a red spruce planting conducted over a decade ago. These trees have been growing under the shade of black cherries and red maples, but are now large enough to be “released”. Around each red spruce, the nearby trees overshadowing it were girdled and sprayed with herbicide. These larger trees will soon die and create canopy openings for the spruce to grow larger and become the dominant overstory species, thus creating more habitat for threatened species such as the Cheat Mountain Salamander.


**Chronic Wasting Disease Sampling**

The Refuge is conducting Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) monitoring on roadkill deer in Tucker County. This study involves driving county roads and collecting adult deer that have been hit by vehicles. (The refuge does not collect fawns because it is harder to detect CWD in young deer.) The head is taken off the deer and taken back to the office to collect the lymph nodes and obex. The samples are then sent in to be tested for CWD. As of now, there have been no confirmed cases of CWD in Tucker County. The Refuge has completed sampling of nine adult deer and will continue to assist the WV DNR in future sampling.

**Early Successional Non-Commercial Forest Management**

During the weeks of February 14th and February 21st the refuge staff and volunteers participated in a non-commercial forestry management project. The goal was to fall all trees within 4.7 acres of forest. This project was continued from last year’s work along Beall North Trail. Staff and volunteers used a skid steer with a forestry cutting head to clear out small beech brush and thin trees making pathways for the operators using the excavator. The excavator operators knocked down trees on the site. The goal of this project was to create early successional (young forest) habitat for American woodcock, which are an important species on the refuge.
Volunteer Update

THANK YOU for making sure you communicate your weekend walks/talks to us. Not only is counting Volunteer hours important, so is counting our Visitors that attend those events- allowing us to give more accurate reports for the Public Use and Environmental Education. If you are unable to record your hours and attendees at Visitor Desk or on refrigerator in Maintenance Office- please send Stephanie an email Stephanie_roy@fws.gov to capture your time and visitors.

Volunteers have contributed 3750+ hours since we started tracking for Awards on October 1, 2018.

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The new Friends bookstore taking shape!
New Property Added to the Refuge!

244 acres have been added to the refuge in 2019! This property resides across the road from the headquarters and runs along the Blackwater River. In the picture below you can see the two parcels that make up the 244 acres. This acquisition is a crucial piece to the refuge. The refuge now owns on both sides of the Blackwater River which helps with the development of the water trail. The Refuge will also be expanding its trail system off of Beall South trail.

Farm View Trail!

There will be some changes to the Refuge's trails this late spring, early summer. Beall South trail will extend onto the new property and will now become Farm View trail. This trail will be a 2.8 mile loop and will now include mountain biking. The portion of Beall South trail that runs along the river will still be named Beall South. As of right now we have walked and mapped out the trail. Next steps will be to mow the path and remove some down woody debris. Nearly all the of the trail will stay on old existing farm roads. We are also working on a display to highlight some of the old existing farm equipment that was left out there. Stay tune and we will be sure to inform everyone of its opening!
CANAAN VALLEY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

SUMMER JOB OPPORTUNITY
Youth Conservation Corps Enrollees (5 Positions)

WHERE: Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge
Headquarters, located on Route 32 in Canaan Valley

WHAT: Full-Time (40 hrs/week), summer employment, June-August

HOURS: Monday through Friday, 7:30am-4pm
for 8 weeks from June 15th to August 7th.

SALARY: Minimum wage

DUTIES: Complete natural resource conservation, protection, and enhancement projects
including trail and garden maintenance, boardwalk repairs, wildlife surveys, etc. Duties are
performed in all types of weather/outdoor conditions.

REQUIREMENTS: Ability to use common hand
tools and to perform physical labor. Must be
between 15 and 18 years of age for the duration of
the program. Must have parental approval and
transportation to refuge headquarters. Must be a
U.S. citizen or permanent resident.

Applications can be found at:
https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Canaan_Valley/what_we_do/ycc.html

SELECTION: Enrollee selection will be on a random basis from the pool of eligible applicants.
Those not initially selected will remain on an alternate candidate list should vacancies occur during
the program. Applications are currently being accepted.

ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED AT THE ADDRESS BELOW BY May 1st, 2020!
Due to PRIVACY LAWS we will NOT be accepting applications via email.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Connor Smith
Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge
6263 Appalachian Way
Davis, WV 26260
Telephone: 864-934-7498
E-mail: connor_smith@fws.gov
http://www.fws.gov/refuge/canaan_valley/
Roadside work on AFrame Road

Refuge Staff has be cutting brush and trees back from A-Frame road. The work has been accomplished by using an excavator with a forestry mulching head that was borrowed from Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge. The purpose for trimming the brush and trees back from the road is to allow sunlight to the road surface to assist in drying out and preventing potholes. When the small brush is cut with the mulching head it is turned into mulch and allows for quicker decomposition. It is important to complete this work while the brush is smaller, if it was allowed to grow into larger trees they would have to be cut by chainsaw resulting in a much larger expenditure of man power. One note of caution, the forestry mulching head can discharge items at a distance of over 300 feet, so please keep your distance!